



CYGNET THEATRE COMPANY

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CYGNET'S STORYTELLING ON THE GREEN TAKES ON MIDSUMMER'S MECHANICALS!

The Tale of PYRAMIS AND THISBE comes to Life in the Heart of Old Town.

SAN DIEGO, CA – As part of Cygnet's relocation to the Old Town San Diego State Historic Park, performances have begun for "**Storytelling on the Green,**" out-door, abridged Shakespeare performed by two actors in mid-19th century attire. Beginning in April, 2009, Cygnet's Shakespearean players have creatively performed the lamentable tale of *Macbeth*, weekly – Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, on the public green of Old Town San Diego State Historic Park. **Rehearsals are now underway to tell another Shakespearean classic – the lively story of *Midsummer's Pyramis and Thisbe!***

Through a collaboration with the **San Diego City School's 4th-grade-in-the-Park Program**, over 10,000 San Diego students will see the performances annually, in addition to tens of thousands of park visitors. **Cygnet Theatre's Storytelling actors**, who currently include **Brian Mackay** (Cygnet's *The History Boys*), **Jacob Caltrider** (Cygnet's *The History Boys*) and **Rachel Van Wormer** (Cygnet's *Curse of the Starving Class, Arcadia and The Matchmaker*) present abridged Shakespeare performances of *Macbeth* and soon, excerpts from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Keeping with the mid-19th century theme of the Old Town San Diego State Historic Park, **the actors perform in the Delsarte style**, common during the American Period (1840-1872). Purposefully bare bones, the actors arrive at the Old Town lawn pulling a simple wagon platform, which carries the props, scenery and costumes, and also serves

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as the stage. The shows are targeted to a young audience, providing interactive and participatory activities, such as sword fighting and juggling that are inherent in Shakespeare's plays – and, perhaps most entertaining of all, with only two actors playing all of Shakespeare's sprawling characters.

Thus far, the program has been a tremendous success with students, educators and park visitors alike. **The program is coordinated by Cygnet's Associate Artistic Director, Francis Gercke**, who wears many hats as script supervisor, liaison to the park, ACTOR and director. **As this project is free to the students and the public**, project costs are covered by generous gifts from area foundations and corporations.

Currently, Cygnet Theatre's ***Storytelling on the Green*** is funded by the City of San Diego - Commission for Arts and Culture, The San Diego Foundation, Qualcomm. The Samuel I. & John Henry Fox Foundation, The Heller Foundation of San Diego, Sempra Energy, Cushman Family Foundation and Adrian Jaffer & Ann Laddon.

"It's been a real thrill and an exciting challenge to perform Shakespeare in such a rustic style," said Francis Gercke. "With the demanding quick changes from character to character and tons of fun props and gags, even *Macbeth* becomes a laugh-filled crowd pleaser. Now we're looking forward to getting one of Shakespeare's most beloved comedies on it's feet and seeing how it plays."

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Cygnet Theatre Company is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization founded in 2002 by Artistic Director Sean Murray and Executive Director Bill Schmidt. In 2003, Cygnet renovated a storefront at 6663 El Cajon Blvd in the Rolando area into a 157-seat theatre. Cygnet has received over 40 awards and grown to one of the most highly regarded theatre companies in the San Diego area. In December 2007, Cygnet was awarded a 10-year lease by State of California Department of Parks and Recreation Concessions and Reservations Division of the Old Town Theatre. Located in Old Town San Diego State Historic Park, the 248-seat venue was renovated during the summer and fall of 2008 and re-opened in November.